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Council on Accreditation

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May 16, 2008

Cheryl S. Stephani
Assistant Secretary
Children's Administration
Washington State Department
of Social & Health Services
Office Building 2, 14th & Jefferson
Olympia, WA 98502

Dear Cheryl:

Pursuant to COA's Policies & Procedures, I convened a meeting on May 12th of an Accreditation Commission to render an independent decision regarding the status of the Children's Administration's (the Department) pursuit of accreditation.

The five highly experienced human service professionals who comprised the Commission agreed that their primary responsibility was to act on behalf of the best interests of the children and families served by the Department. As such, they sought to make a determination that balances the value of continuing the accreditation process with the need to have a date certain for the implementation of standards that directly impact the health and safety of children.

The Commissioners reviewed in detail all of the documents that were provided (see Reid Scher's email to Tim Hunter) and took special note of the substantial progress made by the Department since it began its accreditation process in 2001. They each commented on the dedication and achievement of staff at several offices in successfully implementing COA's standards.

Following a comprehensive discussion during which a number of options were discussed, the Commission unanimously upheld COA's decision detailed in its April 11th letter and determined that the Department's accreditation process is to remain on hold subject to the following:

1. By **June 2, 2008**, the Department will sign and return the attached copy of this letter indicating its agreement to fully comply with the terms of the Commission's decision as described below. If it fails to do so, its accreditation will immediately be deemed to be denied.

2. Thereafter, by **June 30, 2008**, the Department will submit a written plan with proposed completion dates for the full implementation of the following standards that includes a schedule of interim milestones leading up to their full implementation:
 - A. Caseload Size: S10.7.06; S10.7.07; S14.10.05; S21.11.03; S21.11.04; S21.16.02 (treatment foster care, as applicable); and S21.29.04.
 - B. Supervisor Credentials: S10.7.02; S14.10.01; and S21.11.02.
 - C. Comprehensive Family Assessments: G8.2.02.
 - D. 30-day Visits: S21.4.02; S21.4.03 (twice monthly for special needs kids); and S21.8.05.
3. Finally, by **September 1, 2008**, the Department will develop and submit to COA all required departmental policies for each of the following:
 - A. Caseload Size
 - B. Supervisor Credentials
 - C. Comprehensive Family Assessments: G8.2.02

When the Department complies with all of the above, its reaccreditation process will immediately be reinstated. However, should it fail to fulfill any of these conditions, its accreditation will immediately be deemed to be denied.

Recognizing the progress that has been made and the exceptional effort that has been exerted by so many members of the Department's staff, the Commissioners asked that I express their sincere hope that the Department will choose to accept this decision and fulfill its terms. By so doing, it will send a clear message to its staff, those it serves and the people of Washington that it is committed to completing the accreditation process and to using that process as a strategy to strengthen the quality of services provided to Washington State's most vulnerable consumers.


The COA staff and I share the hope of the Commissioners. We are committed to working with the Department in a collegial and facilitative manner in its pursuit of accreditation. As you and I have discussed, accreditation is a strategy to strengthen the quality of services provided. This is a goal that we both share, and we are prepared to assist you and your colleagues in any way, including meeting with State officials to communicate the importance of COA accreditation and the progress made by the Department.

Cheryl S. Stephani
Assistant Secretary
Children's Administration
Washington State Department
of Social & Health Services

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I look forward to your acceptance and to continuing our important work. As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Richard Klarberg
President & CEO

Attachment

cc: Honorable Christine Gregoire, Governor of the State of Washington
Robin Arnold-Williams, Secretary, Washington State Department
of Social & Health Services
Timothy Hunter, Accreditation Program Manager, Children's Administration,
Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Relevant Accreditation Commissioners

Accepted:

Name (Print)

Signature

Date